

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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BRAQUE: THE PAPIERS COLLÉS
OPENS AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
ON OCTOBER 31, 1982

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 8, 1982. Thirty collages by the inventor of the medium in its modern form, French artist Georges Braque (1882-1963), go on view in the National Gallery of Art's East Building on October 31, 1982. The exhibition celebrates the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth and will remain on view until January 16, 1983.

This exhibition, and its catalogue, is a joint project of the National Gallery of Art and the Musée national d'art moderne at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Organizers of the exhibition are Dominique Bozo, Director, Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, curator, both of the Centre Georges Pompidou, and E. A. Carmean, Jr., curator of twentieth-century art at the National Gallery.

Both institutions had begun preparing exhibitions of Braque's collages to celebrate the centenary of his birth. When this was discovered, a combined effort was agreed

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upon. Twenty-seven of the collages on view in Washington were exhibited in Paris from June 15 to September 27, 1982, accompanied by a French edition of the catalogue. Three collages have been added for the National Gallery's showing.

In collage (papier collé or "pasted paper" in French), pictures are composed of pieces of cut and pasted paper on surfaces of paper, cardboard, or canvas. Recent scholarship has revealed that Braque invented collage in the late summer of 1912 while working at Sorgues, near Avignon. Attracted by a display of wood-grained (faux bois) paper in an Avignon shop window, he incorporated pieces of the paper into a charcoal drawing and produced the papier collé, Fruit Dish and Glass, which opens the exhibition.

Braque's new technique was instantly embraced by his friend and fellow cubist Pablo Picasso, and both artists produced numerous collages in the years 1912-1918. They were attempting to invent a new pictorial reality which would bridge the gap between art and the "real world;" collage addressed this challenge by introducing non-traditional materials from everyday life into works of art.

Together with accompanying documentation in the catalogue, the exhibition establishes Braque as the originator of this significant technique in its twentieth-century form, and thus corrects the long-held view that Braque played a secondary creative role to Picasso in the inventive years preceding World War I.

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The extensive selection of works documents Braque's development of the medium from the earliest examples, using only faux bois paper, to increasingly complex compositions incorporating a variety of paper materials. Of special interest in addition to Braque's first collage, Fruit Dish and Glass (1912), are Guitar and Program (1913), formerly in the collection of Picasso, and Aria de Bach (1913), a recent gift to the National Gallery from Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

The fully illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition contains six essays which explore and examine Braque's technique and the ensuing development of the collage medium, his relationship with Picasso, and the importance of collage for the development of cubism and later modern art. A catalogue raisonné of Braque's collages and a detailed chronology of his life and critical response to his work complete the catalogue.

Although widely admired for his contributions to modern art, Braque has yet to receive the detailed study afforded his colleague, Picasso. This exhibition and catalogue serve to help fill the gap in knowledge concerning Braque's career in the years immediately before and after World War I.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Marla Price, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.